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DEPT FOR EAP/CM, DRL
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E.O. 12958: DECL: X1 MANUAL REVIEW
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [CH](#)
SUBJECT: ZHENG ENCHONG UPDATE

CLASSIFIED BY: Veomayoury Baccam, Acting Section Chief,
Political/Economic Section , U.S. Consulate Shanghai.
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. During a conversation with Poloff on June 10, Shanghai Lawyer Zheng Enchong, who was jailed for three years after he advised more than 500 families involved in housing disputes, said that police continued to closely monitor his movements and had made it impossible for him to find a job in Shanghai. Although a friend was secretly working to move Zheng to Germany, Zheng would like to move to Hong Kong where he could continue to have contacts with his friends and hopefully be able to find a job advising companies on Shanghai's real estate market. Zheng has approached local authorities for permission to travel to Hong Kong to speak on human rights. However, local authorities refused to allow him to travel unless he agreed to not speak to the media for three months and signed a statement admitting his guilt. End Summary.

¶2. (C) In a meeting with Poloff on June 10, Shanghai Lawyer Zheng Enchong reported that he continued to be under heavy police surveillance and was seriously considering leaving China. Zheng advised more than 500 families displaced by urban redevelopment projects in Shanghai and served a three-year prison term for "revealing state secrets" from 2003 until June 2006. Since his release, he has been under virtual house arrest and has only been able to leave his house to attend church or run small errands. Zheng was able to meet Poloff by sneaking away during church services. While Zheng would like to stay in Shanghai and continue his work as a lawyer, the constant police surveillance had made it impossible for him to find a job.

¶3. (C) Zheng was contemplating his next move. He said, ideally, he would like to relocate to Hong Kong and travel back and forth from Hong Kong to the Mainland. It would be easy for him to find work in Hong Kong as an advisor to companies interested in Shanghai's real estate market, and he would also be able to remain in contact with many of his friends. He distrusted the Hong Kong government, however, and was considering other options. A friend was working with a German organization to get him a one-year fellowship in Germany. Zheng hoped that this would work out and noted that his daughter was taking German language classes every night. He said if he was not able to move to Hong Kong or go to Germany, he would consider applying for political asylum from the United States.

14. (C) Zheng noted that many of his friends wanted him to remain in Shanghai. One group of lawyers even offered to buy his house for him so that he would not need to move. The lawyers said he had symbolic value for lawyers in China who were struggling to defend their clients' rights. They would like for him to remain in Shanghai and continue his work as a housing rights activist. Zheng said he was moved by their statements but that it was just too difficult for him to stay in Shanghai. He added that his handlers told him that he needed to find a way to leave the country in the next three months or the government would increase its harassment and find a way to detain him.

15. (C) Zheng was currently focused on getting permission from local authorities to travel to Hong Kong. He had an open invitation from He Jun-ren aka Albert Ho, a prominent Hong Kong lawyer and human rights activist, to travel to Hong Kong and speak about the human rights situation in China. According to Zheng, local authorities told him he could travel only if he agreed to not speak to the press for the next three months and also to sign a statement admitting his guilt. So far, Zheng has refused to comply with these conditions and continued to push the local government on this issue.

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